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Cherry Vanilla (A) and Tom Dempsey, complete with bumble bee costume . . . both are veterans of the new musical phenomenon, the rock debauch.

# The New Rock Party Syndrome

By LILLIAN ROXON

IN SAN FRANCISCO, they had escargots and oysters Rockefeller and pounds and pounds of prime ribs, and couples behaving in an unprintable manner in both the lobbies and the restrooms of the stately San Francisean hotel.

In Ipswich, Mass., as you might expect, it was a different story, with four New England ladies ladling out the cole slaw as though it might not last the night, which, as a matter of fact, it didn't. And just as well. You should have seen what happened to the people who actually ate it.

The occasion was one of those rock debauches that record companies turn on when they want to show the music industry how hip and wicked and dolce vita they are.

Warner Brothers set the style about a year ago with an Alice Cooper party that featured a topless 500-pound singer called TV Mama. Not to be outdone, RCA had a party for the Kinks at which their most dignified president, Rocco Laginestra, posed bravely smiling with a gentleman entirely covered in sequins cradled in his arms.

### *Hipper and Wickeder*

You can't get much more hip and wicked and dolce vita than that, but this week, in a huge deserted old castle just north of Boston, a company called Metromedia Records sure as hell tried.

As I explained before, this was Debauch Fast. The West Coast shindig cost a cool $30,000 ($6,000 for the food alone and don't ask how much to replace all the silverware that disappeared).

The excursion to Castle Hill, Ipswich, Mass., cost only $15,000 mainly, I suspect, because the cutlery was yellow plastic. The chimpanzee hired to do Ed Sullivan imitations didn't come cheap, but Gross National Productions, the band that dressed up as bumble bees for the occasion, records for the company, and therefore came free.

The original plan had been to show a film, "Tales of the Crypt," at midnight, but it was soon apparent that no commercial film could match for horror the sight of 400 local and imported rock notables overdosing on coleslaw and the kind of white bread Adelle Davis would like to introduce capital punishment against.

An outfit called Video White Light, hired to preserve on videotape the evening's entertainment, for posterity, searched high and low for couples behaving unprintably. No luck. The main preoccupation of the evening was would they serve coffee and dessert, and if not, then for heaven's sakes, why not?

A young lady called Cherry Vanilla observed that it was hard to be languorous while reclining on a stomach full of coleslaw, and, where were the cushions and the oysters?

Although most of the 400 attending were good-looking long-haired salesmen from the hip record stores in the nearby Harvard University area, there was a goodly sprinkling of stars or about-to-be-stars.

I noticed Boston-based Livingstone Taylor, Andy Paley of the Sidewinders; Providence, Rhode Island's I.C. Lotz, famous in rock circles for her reviews and tape "recipes"; Leee (with three "e"s) Black Childers, the rock photographer, whose platinum hair stands out *anywhere;* Rolling Stone's Jon Landau; Hollywood's Miss Christine with one of the Modern Lovers (they don't call themselves that for nothing, apparently) and J. Geils' own Peter Wolf, so entirely surrounded by male and female groupies that I just *know* he's going to be the new Tom Jones. And who deserves fame and fortune and adulation more than this brilliant front man for a really brilliant band?

### *'Great Lobster Rolls'*

Back at the videotape cameras, rock humorist R. Meltzer was telling Cherry Vanilla: "This is a wunnerful party. The lobster rolls are great."

The next day I rang Metromedia to get a little perspective on the evening's events. "Why are you asking all these questions?" they asked, fearfully. Their one fear, it seems, was that I might make the evening sound too respectable.

I promised I would make it sound as awful as I possibly could, so that Metromedia would have a fighting chance to sign some acts away from swinging Warner Brothers and thoroughly depraved RCA. In conclusion, it wouldn't be fair not to mention Gross National Productions, the band with the bumble bees in whose honor ostensibly the whole event took place. For that, I can do no better than to quote what my California colleague Chris Van Ness wrote about them in the L.A. Free Press: "Given time, they could conceivably turn into a very interesting group." Honestly, I just couldn't have put it better myself.

AMPLIFICATIONS: Genius organist Barry Goldberg, who's been part of so many top ten albums (including Bob Dylan's) is alive, well, in great shape, looking for a manager who's a human being and planning a new album that sounds more than fantastic. . . . A very rare interview with Jack Casady, who never talks to anyone, will appear soon in "Words and Music" magazine (he talked to B.B. King). . . .

Highly recommended—a new book called "Out of his Head—the Sound of Phil Spector" by English writer Richard Williams (Outerbridge and Lazard, $6.95) due out May 30. . . . Someone who toured with Rod Stewart and the Faces has come back with simply awful stories about the way the band treats groupies and hotel rooms. . . . An organic restaurant called the Magic Shop, on Irving Place between 17th and 18th Street is where lots of rock people go before concerts. . . . I agree entirely with what News reporter Pat O'Haire wrote here last Sunday about the security thugs at Carnegie Hall. They tried to search my pocketbook once. If you have any trouble with them, let me know. . . .

## RECORD REVIEW

By DOUGLAS WATT

CAST ALBUMS are no longer the automatic by-products of Broadway musicals they were during the 1950s and well into the 1960s, or until that musical form loosely known as rock had swept practically everything else off the charts. And it is probably this latter phenomenon that has induced MGM to issue a cast album of "Grease," the "1950s rock musical" currently at the Eden.

Like the show itself, the album has a special charm as it traces the mores of the 1959 graduating class of Rydell High during its undergrad years. The Pink Ladies and the Burger Palace Boys are a raffish and joyous lot whether whooping it up in "We Go Together" and "Those Magic Changes" or lamenting about it raining on prom night or being alone at a drive-in movie.

The hero and heroine are named Danny Zuko and Sandy Dumbrowski and are played by Barry Bostwick and Carole Demas. Both are fine company but so are Adrienne Barbeau, who sings "Look at Me, I'm Sandra Dee"; Timothy Meyers ("Greased Lightnin' "), Alan Paul ("Beauty School Dropout") and the rest.

The songs, the work of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, are unpretentious and accurate recreations of early rock 'n' roll, absurd but irresistibly lively. And the vocal and small-band arrangements are disarming.

Joe Raposo, musical director of both "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company," is hoping to do an "E.C." album soon to follow up the success of his Grammy-winning "S.S." LP. . . . Singer Tommy Makem will record his own "Ecology Songs for Children" for Harp & Bard. . . . Columbia's "1776" soundtrack album should go over big at the Colony Record Shop. . . . Songstress Keely Smith (onetime Louis Prima sidekick) is making a comeback. . . . Duke Ellington, busy as ever at 72, said at Downing Street: "Only 18 years to go to catch up to Stokowski."

### BEST SELLERS

First Time Ever I Saw Your Face *(Flack, Atlantic)*
I Gotcha *(Tex, Dial)*
I'll Take You There *(Staple Singers, Stax)*
Look What You've Done For Me *(Green, London)*
Rockin' Robin *(Jackson, Motown)*

Adrienne Barbeau



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